

April 9, 2020

UPDATED COVID-19 Guidance about Zoom and Security

Zoom Privacy and Security Concerns Addressed in Account Settings

You may have seen articles in the press or advisories from state and federal government agencies regarding privacy and security concerns associated with Zoom accounts. Most of the privacy and security concerns that have been raised are issues on accounts without security and privacy settings. OCA takes these concerns seriously and has reviewed the security settings of all OCA-issued Zoom accounts to ensure that the appropriate settings are in place to protect proceedings occurring in those accounts. Here are a few examples of steps OCA has taken to address the concerns:

- “Zoombombing” or other people entering Zoom meetings to display inappropriate content – OCA has the default settings to have separate meeting IDs assigned to each new meeting rather than using the same meeting ID. OCA has advised users not to publish the meeting IDs in a public forum. In addition, OCA enabled the “Waiting Room” function to permit judges/hosts to admit to the meeting only those participants who are expected in the hearing.
- End-to-end encryption – OCA’s Zoom account uses transport encryption, meaning that the data is encrypted as it is transmitted to prevent unauthorized access. This is the same type of encryption used by online banking transactions, email, web browsers, and other typical online applications.
- Malicious links being sent in chat – OCA has configured the settings to require the judge/host to admit only expected participants. In addition, OCA has limited the types of files that can be transmitted via chat to those that do not pose a significant risk of containing malicious content.
- Zoom has zero-day flaws in it that allow others to control your camera, microphone, computer – This type of attack requires the “hacker” to have physical access to the computer. OCA does not anticipate that this is an issue with OCA-issued accounts.
- Zoom uses servers in China – Zoom has confirmed that OCA’s accounts are not routed through data centers in China; only accounts from China are routed through Chinese data servers.
- Zoom leaking user email addresses and profile photos to strangers – OCA has turned off the feature that allows this to occur.
- Zoom sending data to Facebook without user permission – OCA has recommended that users create accounts with an email and password and log in to the account via Facebook; Zoom has also removed this function from its application.

Zoom continues to update its application to improve security and privacy features, and users should allow the application to update as the new versions are released. To ensure that you have the latest version that will contain the most recent security and privacy features, please make sure that you accept the updates as they are presented to you. To ensure that you have the latest update (currently version 4.6.10):

- Once the Zoom Meetings Client is launched, click on your user icon (picture or letter with your initial) on the top right.
- From the drop-down menu click ‘Check for Updates.’
- If new updates are available, a message will appear that says ‘Update Available’. Click on ‘Update’ to install.

Texas Courts YouTube Channel Directory Updated to Show “Live Now”

In the past two weeks, Texas judges have held almost 5,000 court proceedings through OCA-issued Zoom licenses, and with judges scheduling multiple cases per proceeding, it is anticipated that well over 10,000 hearings have occurred remotely. Judges have collectively spent 22,700 hours in hearings with almost 51,000 participants. This week, OCA released a [video](#) highlighting the work of the Texas courts’ transition to virtual hearings, and the Supreme Court of Texas became the first nine-member state supreme court to have virtual oral arguments when it heard [three cases](#) yesterday and streamed them live via YouTube.

Earlier this week, OCA distributed a “[Background and Legal Standards](#)” document and “[Bench Card](#)” to judges regarding the need to provide the public with live access to virtual hearings. To assist the public in locating court hearings that are being streamed live, OCA has updated the [YouTube Court Channel Directory](#) to display when a court’s YouTube channel is live. If your court’s YouTube channel is not listed, please send the web address of the channel to zoomhelp@txcourts.gov.

Guidance on Conducting Proceedings – Unchanged from Previous Week’s Guidance

This Guidance does not change the guidance that was previously provided regarding conducting proceedings:

- The Supreme Court and Court of Criminal Appeals Third Emergency Order has prohibited conducting non-essential proceedings in person contrary to local, state, and national directives, whichever is most restrictive, regarding maximum group size. The limitation on group size would apply the local stay-at-home or shelter in place order standards to court proceedings.
- OCA recommends that you **delay in-person proceedings** of any size until **at least May 8**.
- Essential proceedings should occur in-person only if:
 - Holding the proceeding remotely is not possible or feasible;
 - No more than 10 persons are gathered in the courtroom or in areas around the courtroom (see exception below); and
 - Participants in the courtroom are separated consistent with social distancing and other precautions.
- EXCEPTION: Essential proceedings may occur in-person in excess of the 10-person maximum if the law requires more than 10 persons for the proceedings, such as grand jury deliberations.
- No non-essential proceedings should be held in-person.
- With the introduction of the new remote proceedings capability through Zoom, most non-essential proceedings, except for jury trials, can be conducted remotely, and there are no limitations on those remote proceedings so long as reasonable notice and access is provided to the participants and the public.